



PHILIP L. BROWNING  
Director

## County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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August 6, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
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Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Philip L. Browning  
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "P. Browning", is written over the printed name and title of Philip L. Browning.

### **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY**

This memo is to request your assistance in working with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to reinstate their practice of extending credit to the County of Los Angeles, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), for unused EZ transit passes.

### **BACKGROUND**

As a Human Services Agency, passes and tokens are provided to the regional offices within the DCFS to enable clients to attend therapy, counseling sessions, visit their children, etc. It is crucial that these supportive services are available since all clients receiving passes and/or tokens have been specifically identified as in-need of transportation services in a case plan or by court order. Children's Social Workers (CSWs) are responsible for determining what will best fit their client's needs as it relates to the amount and the type of transit items ordered on their behalf. CSWs are also responsible for distribution of the passes and/or tokens and obtaining the client's signature as proof of receipt.

In September 2012, there was a change in MTA policy that eliminated the Department's ability to receive credit for unused passes. This change in policy had a significant impact on the business practices related to the purchasing and distribution of bus passes for the Department's 22 different regional offices and programs.

As a result of the 2012 policy change, in an effort to reduce the number of EZ transit passes that expire without being used, the Department, in 2013, developed and implemented a reduction method to minimize excess purchases in regional offices' future orders of transit passes/tokens by reducing the order by 75% of the amount "returned" in excess of the amount being distributed.

## **CHALLENGES**

Even with proper planning, orders for EZ transit passes may exceed the unforeseen need in any given month as well as timeliness of distribution can be affected by the high volume of caseloads, competing priorities for the safety of children and opportunities for client contact and proper distribution.

As you are aware, a recent Auditor-Controller's report noted that during a four-month period, DCFS purchased approximately 27,500 EZ transit passes valued at \$2.3 million. During the same four-month period, 1,906 (7%) of the EZ transit passes valued at \$160,000 were unused. EZ transit passes expire at the end of each month, regardless of their usage. Prior to 2012, MTA extended credit to the Department for the unused EZ transit passes. The MTA's subsequent elimination of this practice has resulted in the aforementioned financial impact to the Department.

The Department has discussed this matter with MTA without resolution. Therefore, the Department is respectfully requesting your assistance in working with MTA to reinstate their practice of extending credit for unused EZ transit passes.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please call me or your staff may contact Cynthia McCoy-Miller, Senior Deputy Director, at (213) 351-5847 or Rogelio Tapia, Departmental Finance Manager III, at (213) 351-3244.

PLB:CMM  
RT:ow

c: Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Auditor-Controller